

Bridgeport, Nebraska
Tuesday, March 31, 2020

The Morrill County Board of Commissioners met in an open and public emergency meeting at 10:00 A.M., Tuesday, March 31, 2020 in the Commissioners' room at the Courthouse. Chairperson Metz announced that the Open Meetings Law was posted on the wall in the Commissioners' room. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Notice of such meeting having been posted in various locations on March 30, 2020. Copies of the Agenda, kept continuously current were available from the County Clerk's office and were e-mailed to each of the Commissioners, March 31, 2020. On roll call Commissioners Jeff Metz, Chairperson, Susanna Batterman and Greg Sterkel were present. Absent: None. Several Elected and Appointed Officials were also present. Kathleen L. Brandt, County Clerk, recorded the proceedings of the meeting.

Chairperson Metz stated that the Governor and Panhandle Health had issued a new statement for the Panhandle Health regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic. Metz asked Travis Rodak to describe what it involves. Rodak said it is a major directed health measure for the Panhandle and Grant County. He said everything that was recommended before, is now law. He said gathering of more than 10 people is now illegal, except for County, City or State governments, grocery stores, offices, factories and courts. Discussion was held about people working in the courthouse who may develop symptoms need to quarantine themselves for 14 days. Metz said that because we have dedicated and committed employees, we need to keep them safe. He said that because of the court system, we will not be locking the doors and then he asked each office how they were going to handle this matter. Each office head told how they were planning on handling this. Milo Cardenas, County Sheriff, said that they only allow the public to come into one area and they are screened. Rodak said they are keeping office clean and are trying to cut down on foot traffic. He said that court will go on and in some instances they can use a device to keep the judge from coming in contact with the person. Julie Schildt, Clerk of District Court, said that motion day will be by WebEx and she will be directed by the judge on how to handle things. Loretta McCoy, County Treasurer, said that she plans to close her office, but stay fully staffed to handle appointments, made in advance, and for the payments that come through online or by mail. McCoy said that if any one of us gets sick or is exposed to this virus, we would all have to be quarantined and then no one could run the offices. She said even though DMV has extended their deadline, real estate taxes are still due May 1st. She said there will be ads in the paper and posted and this will reduce face to face contact. Rose Nelson, County Assessor, said that she will close her window and keep fully staffed and handle business through appointments and email and mail. Kathy Brandt, County Clerk, said that she wants her staff to be safe, because she cannot afford to have them quarantined with election coming up. She said that she does not have any backup if they were to get sick. She said she has ordered an outside drop box for ballots and the other offices could receive payments, etc. in there too and she would get it to the appropriate office. She said she still has Title people who usually call ahead to see if we're open and they will continue to come in. Everyone agreed that they are disinfecting their counters every time a customer comes in. Caroline Sanchez, from the Veteran's office said they have been keeping their door closed and taking appointments. She said the VA Regional office is closed as are most of the VSO's by appointment only. Milo suggested that we should warn our employees that if they choose to travel out of the Panhandle that they be quarantined when they return for 14 days with no pay. Metz said we are all Public Servants, paid for by Tax dollars and that we do want to keep everyone safe so the doors will be opened but the offices will be managed however the official sees fit.

There being no further discussion, Chairperson Metz adjourned the meeting at 11:00 A.M. Next meeting will be Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

/s/Jeff Metz, Chairperson

ATTEST:

/s/Kathleen L. Brandt, County Clerk

